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Security Council

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Letter dated 12 June 2015 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Please find attached the report on the work of the Security Council during the presidency of France in March 2015 (see annex). This document was prepared under my supervision, after consultation with the other members of the Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) François **Delattre**

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Annex to the letter dated 12 June 2015 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of France (March 2015)

Introduction

Under the presidency of the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, François Delattre, the Security Council undertook a mission to Africa for a week in March 2015 and held 27 meetings, comprising 25 public meetings and 2 closed meetings, and 14 informal consultations. Two open public debates were also held during the month.

The Council adopted nine resolutions and three presidential statements and issued eight statements to the press during the reporting period.

Africa

Visit of the Security Council to Africa

From 9 to 13 March, the Council visited Africa. The itinerary included the Central African Republic, the African Union in Addis Ababa and Burundi. The Council's visit was co-led by the Permanent Representatives of Angola and France, while the visit to Burundi was also co-led by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America. The Council heard a briefing on the visit on 18 March.

During its first visit to the Central African Republic, on 10 and 11 March, the Council met with the transitional authorities, including the President, Catherine Samba-Panza, civil society representatives and the international forces deployed in the country. The Council also travelled to Bria, where it held talks with the local authorities, religious leaders, civil society representatives, ex-Séléka representatives and the contingent of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) deployed there. During the visit, the Council recognized the progress made since the beginning of the crisis, with the assistance of MINUSCA, the European Union military operation in the Central African Republic and the Sangaris force. The situation remained fragile but nonetheless hopeful. After calling upon the armed groups to renounce violence, the Council expressed its full support for the Central African authorities and encouraged them to complete the transition, in particular by convening the Bangui Forum.

In Addis Ababa, on 12 March, the Council held its ninth annual joint consultative meeting with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. Many African crises were discussed: the situation in the Great Lakes region, the Central African Republic, combating the Boko Haram terrorist group, Mali and the Sahel, Somalia, South Sudan and Darfur. The meeting allowed the two Councils to reaffirm their cooperation under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. A joint communiqué reflecting the main points of agreement of the two Councils at that meeting was issued on 27 March.

In Burundi, on 13 March, the Council met with the President of the Republic, Pierre Nkurunziza, the Minister of the Interior, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, civil society representatives, religious leaders, the Head of the United Nations Electoral Observer Mission in Burundi, Cassam Uteem, and the United Nations country team. Council members noted the significant progress made by Burundi since the end of the civil war and recognized that those gains must now be consolidated. The Council reiterated that the smooth conduct of the electoral process — peaceful, inclusive and transparent — and honouring the Arusha Accords and the Constitution both in letter and in spirit would be crucial for lasting stability in Burundi. They also urged the Government to make further efforts to ensure a space for all political parties and to improve dialogue between all political actors, with a view to ensuring a conducive, free and open environment for the run-up to the elections in 2015.

On 18 March, the Council held its customary briefing following the conclusion of the mission. The President, speaking in his capacity as Permanent Representative of France, described the Council's visits to the Central African Republic and Burundi, while the Permanent Representative of Angola, Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, described the Council's visit to Addis Ababa.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 17 March, the Council held a meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), in the context of the renewal of the mandate of the Mission. It was followed on 19 March by a public meeting and consultations. At the public meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, Martin Kobler, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo. The Council's three interlocutors stressed the importance of cooperation between MONUSCO and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the importance of a future strategic dialogue between the United Nations and the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the future of the Mission. In informal consultations, the Council continued to engage with the Special Representative and the Special Envoy on the future of the Mission and its cooperation with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The member States reiterated their commitment to combating armed groups, to the gradual withdrawal of MONUSCO and to the smooth functioning of the elections in a peaceful, transparent and credible manner, in compliance with the Constitution.

On 26 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2211 (2015), extending the mandate of MONUSCO for one year. In accordance with the recommendation of the Secretary-General in his strategic review, the Council authorized the reduction of the Mission's forces by 2,000, with a view to making MONUSCO more agile, more effective and better able to fulfil its existing mandate to protect civilians. The mandate focuses on the protection of civilians, the holding of credible, transparent and inclusive elections, and the launch of a strategic dialogue between the United Nations and the Democratic Republic of the Congo about the future of MONUSCO. In adopting resolution 2211 (2015), the Council heard a statement by the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of

the Congo, Ignace Gata Mavita wa Lufuta, under rule 37 of the rules of procedure of the Council. He indicated that the dialogue between his Government and MONUSCO had been restored and that the Democratic Republic of the Congo awaited the establishment of the strategic dialogue with the United Nations. In an explanation of vote, the representative of New Zealand supported the provision of regular informal briefings on operations to neutralize armed groups by the Secretariat to the members of the Council.

Central African Republic

On 26 March, the Council adopted resolution 2212 (2015), authorizing the deployment of an additional 750 military personnel, 280 police personnel and 20 corrections officers for MINUSCA. The ceiling of uniformed personnel (military, police and corrections officers) for MINUSCA was thus increased to 12,870 personnel (11,820 were authorized under resolution 2149 (2014)).

Mali

On 7, 8 and 17 March, the Council issued statements on the deaths of peacekeepers of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali in a difficult security environment.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts (Boko Haram)

During consultations held on 26 March under "Any other business", the Permanent Representative of Chad raised the issue of the draft resolution on Boko Haram proposed by the African group of the Council, namely Angola, Chad and Nigeria.

The Permanent Representative of Chad stressed the extremely dangerous threat posed by Boko Haram to Nigeria and the neighbouring countries, namely Cameroon, Chad and the Niger. He mentioned the dire humanitarian consequences of the actions of the terrorist group, particularly the growing number of displaced persons and refugees. He urged the Council to adopt swiftly a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter, as requested by the Lake Chad Basin countries and the African Union, by which the Council would endorse the intervention of the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram and provide the necessary support.

The Council members emphasized the threat posed by Boko Haram to Nigeria and the neighbouring countries. Some said that the views of Nigeria should be considered, while others expressed their preference for, and readiness to contribute to, a United Nations trust fund to support the Multinational Joint Task Force. Many members emphasized the importance of close cooperation among affected countries.

The Council met on 30 March for a public briefing, followed by consultations, with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa, Mohamed ibn Chambas, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Kang Kyung-wha, on the situation in areas affected by Boko Haram, under the item entitled "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts". While welcoming the results of the ongoing military offensive by the countries of the region, the Special Representative stressed the need to tackle the

root causes of the emergence of Boko Haram through a comprehensive strategy to address the socioeconomic challenges, restore the State's authority and thus eliminate the conditions that allowed Boko Haram to thrive. The Assistant Secretary-General indicated that, following the Boko Haram attacks, 1.5 million persons had been displaced in Nigeria and neighbouring countries, 7,333 civilians had been killed since 2014, 300 schools had been destroyed, less than 40 per cent of health facilities were operational and sexual violence was constantly increasing. With regard to the Multinational Joint Task Force, she called for a strict distinction between humanitarian and military operations in order not to jeopardize the work and neutrality of humanitarian workers, while suggesting that the mandate of the Task Force should include a component on respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians. As for the electoral process that had been under way in Nigeria since 28 March, the Special Representative referred to the Economic Community of West African States, which had recognized in a preliminary statement that, notwithstanding some security and logistical incidents, the elections had been free and transparent. He called for that spirit of responsibility to continue to prevail for the remainder of the electoral process. He stressed that the legitimacy of the future Government would be an important requisite for an effective response to Boko Haram and the long-term stability of Nigeria. It was important for the future Government to remain deeply committed on that issue.

Sudan and South Sudan

On 3 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2206 (2015), by which it established a sanctions regime in South Sudan, a Committee, a Panel of Experts and the designation criteria for an asset freeze and a travel ban. In the resolution, the Council expressed its intention to impose any further appropriate sanctions to respond to the situation, including an arms embargo and the designation of senior individuals responsible for actions or policies that threatened the peace, security or stability of South Sudan. Following the adoption, the representatives of four Council members (the United States, China, Nigeria and the Russian Federation) made statements. The Permanent Representative of South Sudan also took the floor under rule 37 of the rules of procedure.

On 17 March, the Council held consultations on the situation in Darfur. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, noted the deterioration of the security situation and the lack of tangible progress with regard to the political process. Referring to the special report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) submitted under resolution 2173 (2014) (S/2015/163), he said that the three strategic priorities of UNAMID endorsed by the Council in its resolution 2148 (2014) should be maintained. He highlighted the efforts made over the past year to improve the functioning of UNAMID, as well as the challenges ahead. He noted the commencement of the work of the tripartite working group on the exit strategy of UNAMID and he considered that any exit strategy should be gradual. The Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Sudan also took the floor under rule 37 of the rules of procedure.

On 18 March, the Council held consultations on the situation in South Sudan. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sudan and South Sudan and Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union, Haile Menkerios, highlighted the failure of the talks held in Addis Ababa on 6 March.

On 24 March, the Council held consultations on the relations between the Sudan and South Sudan. The Special Envoy for the Sudan and South Sudan noted some improvement in the relations between the Sudan and South Sudan, while regretting the lack of tangible progress in the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between the two countries of 27 September 2012, which was due to the priority that they gave to domestic problems. He expressed his concern about the situation in Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States, where security conditions were deteriorating and the humanitarian situation was dire.

On 24 March, following the consultations, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/9) on the situation in South Sudan, in which it expressed profound disappointment with regard to the lack of agreement at the end of the talks held in Addis Ababa and condemned the repeated violations of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of 23 January 2014. The Council reiterated its support for the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and called upon the parties to engage effectively in the peace process. It also reiterated the possibility of imposing sanctions under resolution 2206 (2015).

Somalia

On 28 March, the Council issued a statement to the press condemning the terrorist attack of 27 March against the Maka Al-Mukarama hotel in Mogadishu.

Liberia

On 16 March, in consultations, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations on the situation in Liberia and the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), in accordance with resolution 2190 (2014). The Under-Secretary-General reported a general improvement in the situation in Liberia: the Ebola outbreak was coming to an end, the senatorial elections had taken place smoothly, political reforms were under way and the security situation was stable, notwithstanding a few incidents. He said that the time had come for the withdrawal of UNMIL in order to transfer the responsibility for security to the Government of Liberia by June 2016. Council members expressed support for resuming the withdrawal of the Mission and for a force reduction of 1,200 soldiers and 280 police officers by September 2015, while remaining alert to threats that the epidemic could still pose for the country.

Libya

On 4 March, the Council heard a briefing on Libya and on the Council's related sanctions regime. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Bernardino León, described the evolution of the situation in the country. The Permanent Representative of Malaysia, Hussein Haniff, as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, reported on the work of the Committee.

The Special Representative stressed that the overall situation on the ground in Libya was deteriorating rapidly and that the risks to the country's national unity and territorial integrity were considerable, unless the national leaders acted quickly and decisively. He emphasized the development of the terrorist threat in Libya, particularly after the execution of 21 Egyptian Copts and the Al-Qubba attack. He

also noted that the terrorists were seeking to derail the political process, as they were taking advantage of the political and security vacuum, and that the international community should stand ready to support a political agreement with a strategy for strengthening Libyan institutions and the fight against terrorism. On the political front, he announced that the dialogue among Libyans would resume in Morocco on 5 March and would address the formation of a national unity Government, security arrangements and timelines for the adoption of a new constitution. He noted that the meeting would be followed by two other dialogue meetings, the first bringing together political leaders in Algeria, and the second, in Brussels, for municipal representatives. The Special Representative had confidence in the political will and determination of the parties to reach an agreement, while stressing the challenges they faced.

Speaking under article 37 of the rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of Libya stated that the Libyan army needed weapons to fight terrorists, that Libya was prepared to give guarantees of non-diversion in order to obtain exemptions from the arms embargo from the sanctions Committee and that the fight against terrorism and the political mediation process should advance in parallel.

In consultations, Council members underlined the importance of a political agreement and the early establishment of a national unity Government. Some participants highlighted the need to assist the Government of Libya in combating terrorism. Others, while recognizing the threat, warned against the risk of immediate assistance, believing that it could jeopardize the mediation activities of the United Nations and that, by contributing to the trafficking in weapons, it would increase instability in the country and in the region.

On 5 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2208 (2015), by which it extended until 31 March the mandate of UNSMIL as well as the sanctions regime established in resolution 2146 (2014) on the prevention of illicit oil exports.

On 27 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolutions 2213 (2015) and 2214 (2015).

By its resolution 2213 (2015), the Council extended the mandate of UNSMIL until 15 September 2015 and that of the Committee's Panel of Experts until 30 April 2016. It refocused the mandate of the Mission, as a matter of priority, on supporting the political process, recognized that the current security situation in Libya required a reduction in the size of the mission and requested the Secretary-General to maintain the necessary flexibility and mobility to adjust its staffing and operations. It strengthened the provisions relating to various sanctions regimes (illicit oil exports, travel ban, asset freeze and arms embargo) by expanding them in some aspects, in particular with regard to individual listing criteria.

By its resolution 2214 (2015), the Council encouraged and supported the fight against terrorism in Libya, emphasizing the importance of providing support and assistance to the Government of Libya and calling upon Libyan parties to engage in the United Nations-led political dialogue, with the purpose of forming a national unity Government.

In addition to four Council members, the Permanent Representatives of Egypt and Libya made statements under article 37 of the rules of procedure.

Middle East

Open ministerial debate on the victims of attacks and abuses on ethnic or religious grounds in the Middle East

On 27 March, the Council held a ministerial-level open debate, chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development of France, Laurent Fabius, on the victims of attacks and abuses on ethnic or religious grounds in the Middle East. The debate was held in the presence of eight ministers and deputy ministers.

The Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, drew attention to the brutal atrocities committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Daesh, in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, which could amount to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. They called for an end to impunity for such crimes, including by referring those matters to the International Criminal Court. The Secretary-General announced the development of a plan of action on preventing violent extremism to be launched in September 2015. He also announced the establishment of a group of respected women and men to serve as an advisory panel on inter- and intra-sectarian dynamics.

Two speakers shared their personal experiences with the Council: the Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans, His Beatitude Louis Raphaël I Sako, and a Yazidi member of the Iraqi Parliament, Vian Dakhil. They denounced the crimes committed by ISIL and called upon the international community to protect minorities and help internally displaced persons to return to their land.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of France requested that the Secretary-General draft a charter of action for the protection of minorities in the Middle East, organized around four components: humanitarian assistance and the return of displaced persons; military support to secure the return of displaced persons; the fight against impunity; and the search for inclusive political solutions in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. He announced that France was prepared to host an international conference focusing on the presentation of the findings of the advisory panel, whose priority task should be to draw up a plan of action. Those proposals were broadly supported by participating delegations.

All delegations condemned the atrocities committed by ISIL and encouraged the mobilization of the international community. In view of the risk to the delicate cultural mosaic in the Middle East, most delegations emphasized the importance of the return of displaced persons and refugees and of moderation in religious discourse. The effort to counter terrorism was a long-term process and the military response alone would not be sufficient for the lasting eradication of terrorism. Inclusive political solutions would be required.

Yemen

On 3 March, the Council held consultations on Yemen.

The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Yemen, Jamal Benomar, briefed the Council on the implementation of resolution 2201 (2015), in accordance with that resolution. He stated that the political crisis in Yemen continued, with the refusal of the Houthis to implement the Council's demands, President Hadi's

decision to move to Aden and rescinding his resignation, the increase in and repression of anti-Houthi demonstrations, the training of "popular committees" in the south and calls for partition of the country. The Special Adviser reported on the continuing mediation and the progress made. He said that reaching agreement on the scope of presidential power was the most difficult issue.

The Council members reiterated their support for the United Nations-brokered negotiations and their hope that those would lead to an early consensus-based solution on the basis of the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and Implementation Mechanism, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference and the Peace and National Partnership Agreement and its annex on the security situation. The Special Adviser confirmed that discussions were under way to decide on a venue for further negotiations to which all parties could agree. In view of the departure of President Hadi for Aden and of the opening of embassies in that city, some members expressed concern at a possible partition of the country. Others were of the view that individual sanctions should be used once again to induce the parties to negotiate in good faith. The Special Adviser noted the need to strengthen his team, in particular to ensure effective follow-up on the questions of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Following that meeting, two statements to the press were adopted on 20 March.

On 22 March, the Council held an urgent meeting at the request of a member and unanimously adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/8). It then met in consultations.

The Special Adviser stressed that, with the exception of the release from house arrest of the Prime Minister, the security situation had deteriorated as a result of violent confrontations over the control of Aden and terrorist attacks against mosques in Sana'a and Aden. He said that the prospects for a political settlement were becoming more remote because of the clash between President Hadi and the Houthis. President Hadi had declared Aden the temporary capital, tasked the "popular committees" with providing security for the city and accused former President Saleh and his Houthi allies of launching a coup. The Houthis, who had rejected President Hadi as the legitimate leader, were continuing to occupy government institutions and were expanding into other territories, rejecting the Council's demands.

Under article 37 of the rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of Qatar, whose country was the holder of the presidency of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, and the Permanent Representative of Yemen called upon the Houthis to comply with the Council's resolutions and to engage in good faith in the political process. They welcomed the initiative of Saudi Arabia to convene a conference and encouraged the Yemeni parties, especially the Houthis, to take part. The Permanent Representative of Qatar considered it necessary to adopt a resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter to impose an arms embargo on the Houthis.

In the presidential statement adopted at the meeting (S/PRST/2015/8), the Council reiterated the need for a political solution, called upon the parties to reach an agreement to end the crisis quickly and welcomed the intention of the Gulf Cooperation Council to convene a conference to complement and support the United Nations-brokered negotiations.

During the consultations that followed, the Special Adviser announced that he intended to move talks to Doha, pending the concurrence of the Houthis and of the General People's Congress. All Council members expressed their support for a consensus-based political solution under the auspices of the United Nations. Some members, concerned about the limited impact in the field of Council decisions, questioned the usefulness of additional individual designations or additional measures, such as an arms embargo.

Lebanon

On 17 March, the Council held its quarterly consultations on resolution 1701 (2006) concerning Lebanon. The Special Coordinator of the Secretary-General for Lebanon, Sigrid Kaag, gave her first briefing to the Council since taking office to replace Derek Plumbly. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, spoke on issues relating to the work of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. In their briefings, both speakers conveyed the Secretary-General's concern at the prevailing instability in the region in the aftermath of the incident in the Golan Heights on 18 January and the attack claimed by Hizbullah on 28 January. The Secretariat had reiterated its calls upon the parties to show restraint in order to avoid the risk of escalation. The Special Coordinator also referred to the negative impact on the stability of Lebanon of the continued vacancy of the presidency of the Lebanese Republic. Lastly, she emphasized the continuing instability in Lebanon resulting from the Syrian conflict, marked by an increasing number of border incidents, the influx of refugees and the presence of terrorist groups. She emphasized the importance to Lebanon's stability of unified messages from the Council on the various aspects of the Lebanese situation.

On 19 March, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/7) in which it renewed its support for the stability of Lebanon, reiterated its call upon the parties to exercise restraint in order to preserve the cessation of hostilities in southern Lebanon, called for the election of a President of the Republic without delay, reiterated its support to the Lebanese security forces and Lebanese Armed Forces against the terrorist threat and called upon the international community to increase its assistance to meet the needs arising from the presence of refugees in Lebanon.

Middle East peace process

On 26 March, the Council held an open meeting followed by informal consultations in the presence of the former Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Robert Serry, who gave his last briefing ex officio. He considered that the situation on the ground, with the continuing settlement activity and the polarization of public opinion, was only making the prospect of the two-State solution more distant. Without political change, he reiterated that there would be no alternative to a one-State solution. He appealed to the Council to shoulder its responsibility. He said that the Quartet had failed to live up to expectations and that the resolutions adopted by the Council in recent years had not provided a substantial new peace architecture. Under those conditions, he considered that it was time for the Council to take the lead. Finally, he urged that Gaza, where the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate, not

be forgotten. In the absence of a lasting political solution, the potential of the two-State solution would be eroded.

Syrian Arab Republic and chemical weapons

On 5 March, the Council held consultations on the Middle East with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Angela Kane, to review the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013). The High Representative noted the progress in the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons production facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the ongoing discussions between the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Syrian Government on the country's initial declaration. Lastly, she stated that the fact-finding mission on the alleged use of chlorine gas was continuing its work and that its composition was under review.

Council members exchanged views on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013). Some expressed concern about the persistent inconsistencies in the Syrian initial declaration. Some welcomed the cooperation between OPCW and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and said that they expected progress on the Syrian crisis on the political and humanitarian levels. Several members had supported the draft resolution submitted by the delegation of the United States concerning the use of toxic chemicals, in particular chlorine gas, as a weapon of war in the Syrian Arab Republic.

On 6 March, the Council adopted resolution 2209 (2015), with 14 votes in favour and 1 abstention, concerning the use of toxic chemicals, in particular chlorine gas, as a weapon of war in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic

On 26 March, the Council held a public meeting followed by consultations on the Middle East, in particular the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, with the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos. The Under-Secretary-General emphasized the continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the persistent obstacles to the delivery of aid. She emphasized the country's socioeconomic situation, which was considered critical, citing specific figures (58 per cent unemployment, two thirds of the population living in extreme poverty, a life expectancy that had been reduced by 20 years and malnutrition rates above 10 per cent). She noted that the parties to the conflict had deliberately chosen to ignore Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) and that it was therefore important to give serious consideration to the follow-up to those resolutions. According to the Under-Secretary-General, the Council should continue to exert pressure to ensure respect for international humanitarian law and human rights, and draw the appropriate conclusions regarding the denial of humanitarian access in order to take further concrete steps to guarantee full compliance with its resolutions. Lastly, she called upon the international community to take action in the context of the third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, held on 31 March 2015 in Kuwait, and to give generously in order to finance the United Nations emergency strategic plans. The message about the Pledging Conference was reflected in a statement to the press issued on 26 March.

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

On 24 March, the Council held consultations on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). The Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Dmitry Titov, made a presentation on behalf of the Secretariat. He underlined the continued threat posed by the presence of armed groups in the UNDOF area of operations, as reflected by the regular recurrence of incidents between such groups and the Syrian army, but also incidents targeting the Israeli-controlled area. He confirmed that the bulk of the UNDOF bases had been temporarily relocated to the Israeli side of the area of separation. All the Council members reiterated their support for the Force's activities and for its political objective, which was to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic in order to prevent the spread of instability. Bearing in mind the safety of UNDOF peacekeepers, Council members reiterated that the redeployment of the Force to the Alpha side should be temporary and that the Force should aim to return to positions in the area of separation as soon as conditions permitted.

Europe

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

On 6 March, the Council met to hear briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, the Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, John Ging, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head of the New York Office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Ivan Šimonović, concerning the humanitarian and human rights situation in Ukraine.

The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs said that the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements of 12 February was the road map for resolving the crisis and had become part of the international binding framework through the adoption of resolution 2202 (2015). The ceasefire, however, remained fragile, not yet having taken hold firmly across the region, including in the area of Debaltseve, and there were frequent ceasefire violations in the south near Mariupol and the Donetsk airport. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) had not been able to verify the true extent of the withdrawal of heavy weaponry, owing to the lack of access and freedom of movement of its monitors. The Under-Secretary-General welcomed the continued efforts of the leaders of the Normandy format and the crucial role played by OSCE. The Director of the Coordination and Response Division provided a detailed assessment of humanitarian needs in Ukraine, noting that there were more than a million internally displaced persons and civilians trapped in conflict areas, and that more than 670,000 people had fled to neighbouring countries. More than 5 million Ukrainians (2 million in Government-controlled areas and 3 million in non-Government-controlled areas), were now in need of humanitarian assistance. He outlined the efforts by humanitarian actors and stressed the need to coordinate those actions. He said that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs welcomed the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements but

continued to urge all parties to adhere to the ceasefire and protect civilians. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights highlighted the key findings contained in the ninth report of OHCHR on the situation of human rights in Ukraine based on the work of the Human Rights Mission in Ukraine, drawing attention to the alarming situation in the eastern part of the country and to the negative trend in the rest of Ukraine. He noted that the situation was aggravated by the alleged continued inflow of foreign heavy weaponry and foreign fighters. He said that the much-needed and long-promised reforms were severely jeopardized as they were moved further down in the Government's list of priorities. He pointed out systematic human rights violations in Crimea, notably against the Crimean Tatars.

Council members welcomed the reduction of violence in eastern Ukraine, but some expressed concern over the continued cease-fire violations and continued human rights violations and abuses, particularly in the area of conflict. Council members supported the road map set out in Minsk and endorsed in resolution 2202 (2015), particularly in respect of humanitarian issues, and called for its speedy and full implementation in order to consolidate the current momentum, which was fragile but positive.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations (European Union)

On 9 March, the Council heard a briefing with the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, who had been invited for the first time in her new capacity to introduce the annual review of cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union.

The Secretary-General highlighted the unique contribution of the European Union to the entire United Nations agenda. In that regard, he said that he looked forward to the European Union's input on the review of peace operations. The High Representative provided an update on all the crises that the European Union was engaged in addressing alongside the United Nations, from the situation in Libya to that in Ukraine, as well as the African crises, the situation in the Middle East, the Iranian nuclear issue and the developments in the Balkans. She also referred to cross-cutting issues and future prospects, including the seventieth anniversary of the Charter, the post-2015 development agenda and the renewal of the gender-equality commitments made in Beijing in 2000.

Council members highlighted the major areas of shared commitment and welcomed the fruitful cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter. Two themes stood out in most of the statements: counter-terrorism and Ukraine. On the subject of counter-terrorism, several speakers highlighted the fight against ISIL and expressed concern at the spread of that threat to Africa, emphasizing the need for cooperation with the African Union. Regarding Ukraine, several members expressed support for diplomatic efforts based on the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements and the role of OSCE. The European Union's action to promote peace and security, its regional involvement and its role in promoting human rights and addressing global issues were also often mentioned.

Americas

Haiti

Following the issuance of the Secretary-General's semi-annual report on the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) (S/2015/157), the Council held an open debate on 18 March concerning the midterm review of the Mission. The Council had also held a meeting in private with the troop- and police-contributing countries to MINUSTAH on 16 March.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of MINUSTAH, Sandra Honoré, noted the progress made in the political and electoral spheres, the resumption of consular relations with the Dominican Republic and advances in the fight against cholera. Action to strengthen the rule of law was progressing, including through the preparation of a draft penal code. With regard to security, the Special Representative said that the situation had remained relatively stable, notwithstanding a number of demonstrations, most of which had been handled by the Haitian National Police without operational support from MINUSTAH. The further development of the Haitian National Police nonetheless remained vital, as well as the deployment of 300 additional personnel for the MINUSTAH police component, at a time when the country was entering a complex electoral period. In that regard, the Special Representative called upon police-contributing countries to intensify their efforts to reach the authorized ceiling for police personnel as the Mission reduced its military component to 2,370 personnel.

The Council members and other speakers expressed support for MINUSTAH and the Special Representative. They welcomed the establishment of an electoral timetable and called upon all Haitian actors to ensure the successful conduct of the elections. The vast majority of the Council members expressed satisfaction at the stability of the security situation, the increasing effectiveness and capacity of the Haitian National Police and the reconfiguration that was under way, while encouraging MINUSTAH to coordinate with the host country and remain responsive to its views. Some members expressed scepticism about the downsizing of the military component of MINUSTAH, saying that they feared security conditions could worsen and, citing a request from President Martelly, advocating a pause or even a reversal of the ongoing reconfiguration. Lastly, some members called upon Haiti to do more to ensure women's participation in political life and to improve the situation of prisoners in Haiti, of whom 30 to 50 per cent were still awaiting trial.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 16 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2210 (2015), extending the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for one year.

Also on 16 March, the Council held its quarterly debate on Afghanistan. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA, Nicholas Haysom, recalled the main points of the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/151): satisfaction at the initial appointments to the national unity Government; the strengthening of the operational capacity of Afghan

security forces; and efforts by neighbouring countries to assist Afghanistan in the process of national reconciliation. The Special Representative also noted the many challenges that remained to be overcome: better protection for civilians; improvements in the human rights situation and the rule of law; improvements in economic conditions; and efforts to combat drug trafficking and continue the process of national reconciliation. He also noted reports that ISIL had established a foothold in Afghanistan.

The Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Zahir Tanin, gave an overview of the efforts made by his country over the past 13 years and said that the time had come for Afghanistan to fully exercise its responsibilities as a sovereign State.

The Council members welcomed the end of the transition process in Afghanistan and the launch of the Transformation Decade (2015-2024). They reaffirmed their continued support for the Government and people of Afghanistan in the spirit of Afghan leadership and ownership in the transformation process. They stressed the importance of consolidating democracy and improving the human rights situation in Afghanistan. UNAMA had played an important role in supporting the Afghan-led peace and reconciliation process.

Several States reiterated the importance of good governance and economic development. Some referred in particular to the forthcoming revision of the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework. Others expressed hope that women would play a greater role in the country's future. Some members of the Council also raised concern over the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, especially in its northern areas, and over setbacks in countering the illicit flow of drugs.

Non-proliferation

Islamic Republic of Iran

On 24 March, the Council held an open briefing to consider the quarterly report of the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006). The Permanent Representative of Spain, in his capacity as Chair of that Committee, reported on the work of the Committee for the period from 18 December 2014 to 23 March 2015, pursuant to subparagraph 18 (h) of resolution 1737 (2006).

In his presentation, the Chair of the Committee highlighted the expectations surrounding the negotiations held between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the E3+3 Governments to reach a comprehensive agreement, while noting that the sanctions imposed by means of resolutions 1737 (2006), 1747 (2007), 1803 (2008) and 1929 (2010) would continue to be implemented. He further indicated that the Committee continued to provide assistance to international organizations and Member States in the implementation of the relevant resolutions.

The Council members reiterated their hope that the ongoing negotiations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the E3+3 Governments would lead to a comprehensive agreement, although some noted that differences remained. Some members also expressed concern about the lack of progress in the discussions between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency and called for all outstanding issues to be taken into consideration in the context of the dialogue between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Agency.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 4 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2207 (2015), extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) for one year.

Thematic issues

Terrorism

On 18 March, the Council adopted a statement to the press condemning the attack on the National Bardo Museum in Tunis.

Open debate on children and armed conflict

On 25 March, the Council held an open debate on child victims of non-State armed groups. The Secretary-General, his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Leila Zerrougui, and the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, Johanna Brandt, gave briefings on United Nations activities aimed at separating children from non-State armed groups and reintegrating them into society. The Special Representative recalled that the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign had just celebrated its first anniversary, and emphasized the role of action plans in stopping violations of children's rights.

Two civil society representatives shared their personal experiences with the Council: Junior Nzita, a demobilized former child soldier from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and President of the non-governmental organization Paix pour l'enfance, and Julie Bodin, Child Protection Technical Adviser with Save the Children International in the Central African Republic.

The Council members and other participants condemned the violations against children committed by non-State armed groups, highlighting in particular the violence committed by extremist groups such as Daesh, Boko Haram and other terrorist groups that targeted girls and schools. Many made concrete proposals on the integration of child-protection activities into the work of mediators, the need to approach and engage in dialogue with non-State armed groups, the role of action plans signed by non-State armed groups, child protection information and training for security forces and peacekeeping operations, and the possibility of recognizing abduction in armed conflict as a trigger for listing in the annexes to the annual report of the Secretary-General.

The President of the Security Council had previously invited States to share their operational ideas for taking action against the violence committed by non-State armed groups, for inclusion in a summary non-paper to be prepared by France in its national capacity and transmitted to the Secretary-General for circulation to all Member States and other United Nations actors.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2010/507)

On 30 March, the Council held a public wrap-up session to assess the work it had done in the month of March. At that meeting, the member States reviewed the highlights of the month's work, particularly the Council's visit to Africa.